

April 24th, 2023

Senator Stacy Brenner, Senate Chair
Representative Lori Gramlich, House Chair
Joint Standing Committee on Environment and Natural Resources
100 State House Station
Augusta, Maine 04333

RE: MSCC Testimony in OPPOSITION to L.D. 1621: An Act Regarding Environmental Justice

Senator Brenner, Representative Gramlich and members of the Environment and Natural Resources Committee:

My name is Ben Lucas, I live in Portland, and I represent the Maine State Chamber of Commerce, a statewide business organization consisting of a network of more than 5,000 small and large companies across Maine. The Maine State Chamber of Commerce is submitting testimony in respectful opposition to L.D. 1621.

The Chamber has concerns around the term, “environmental justice” and the impact it could have on the permitting process in Maine. It is critical that, when implementing this in the regulatory processes at the DEP, it does not do anything to further complicate the permitting process. We already have a rigorous and thorough permitting process in Maine, and anything that adds more challenges for projects to come online is of concern to the business community. For example, as we urgently need to combat the environmental and economic challenges that climate change imposes on all of us, it is important that we have a streamlined process so various renewable energy projects can get permitted and come online as soon as possible. The Maine State Chamber is a member of the Maine Climate Council, and we support the carbon reduction goals of 45% by 2030 and 80% by 2050. We also support adding 30,000 new clean energy jobs. To reach these goals, we need a consistent regulatory process.

We would respectfully encourage the committee to vote, “ought not to pass” on L.D. 1621. Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony. I am happy to bring back any additional information to the work session.

Sincerely,
Benjamin R. Lucas
Senior Government Relations Specialist
Maine State Chamber of Commerce
Email: blucas@mainechamber.org